

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

REPUDIATION REPUDIATED—A STIR- RING DISCUSSION IN THE HOUSE.

From the N. Y. World.

The World, on behalf of the Democratic party, proffers its thanks to Mr. Munger, one of the Democratic members from Ohio, for the carefully prepared speech advocating repudiation of the national debt, which he delivered on Thursday in the House of Representatives. We thank him, as most of the Democratic members who replied to him with so much force and spirit thanked him, for saying that he expressed only his individual views, for which nobody else could be held responsible. But his disclaimer of any authority to represent the sentiments of the Democratic party on this question is the smallest of his claims to gratitude. We thank him, especially, for giving an occasion, at this early stage of the session, for the manly, honest, emphatic remarks of so many Democratic Representatives from various States, who branded the views which he uttered as repugnant to their feelings, inconsistent with the national honor, and shocking to the best instincts of upright men. This spontaneous outburst of indignation, honest sentiment on the part of the most distinguished and trusted Democratic members, was needed to explode a calumny against the Democratic party which has been industriously circulated by its enemies; and we repeat our thanks to Mr. Munger for affording these true and tried representatives an opportunity to disclaim and denounce his repudiation crochets in so conspicuous a theatre.

As peculiar honor is due to the soldier who first scales the rampart and mounts the fortification of an enemy, so we must award to Mr. Brooks, of this city, the credit of leading off in the remarks by which the position of Mr. Munger was assailed. Mr. Brooks' promptitude was not the consequence of superior zeal, but of better fortune; but the trenchant emphasis of his remarks gave to the discussion a tone of strength and freedom which removed all restraint from the Democratic members who followed him, and yet if it had happened to any of the others to be first on his feet and get the attention of the Speaker, the tenor of the discussion would not have been different. Mr. Kerr, or Mr. Cox, or General Slocum, or Judge Woodward, or Mr. Randall, or Mr. Potter, would have led with equal vigor and spirit in these conjoint and spontaneous declarations of the purposes of the nation, and of the Democratic masses as a part of it, to maintain the national faith inviolate and the national honor unscathed. These speakers are among those who have the most weight and influence on the Democratic side of the House, and their remarks will attract great attention throughout the country.

The stamp of reprobation which has thus been set by the leading Democratic members upon all schemes or propositions to repudiate the public debt, will be of signal service in confuting the slanders which have been so profusely heaped upon the Democratic party in connection with this subject. Disclaimers and refutations by the Democratic press reach only Democratic readers; but an outline of this discussion in Congress will go into all the Republican newspapers, and the whole country will at length be enabled to see the real position of the Democratic party on this important question. The aspersions uttered by Secretary Boutwell in his Philadelphia speech are not by a contradiction which will circulate as widely as the speech itself. It is a contradiction authenticated by the character and standing of eminent Democrats elected by the party in districts where the party is strong, who understand the temper and faithfully represent the views of their constituents, and who supply the brains and leadership by which the party is to be marshalled for victory in the contests of the near future.

The World forbears to make this an occasion for some obvious objections on its own course which will naturally occur to its readers and the general public. Whether any particular organ of public opinion is vindicated or condemned by the progress of events, is of comparatively little consequence. But it deeply concerns the public welfare that a great political party, which will soon control the government of the country, cherishes a high sense of the sacredness of the national obligations. A portion of the Democratic party may have been confused for a moment by plausible sophistries, and transiently misled by false lights; but the World has never doubted that this fraction of the party was honest in its instincts, nor that its "sober second thought" would cure it of temporary errors. The sophistries to which we allude found more or less favor among prominent men of both political parties; the late Thaddeus Stevens, General Butler, Senator Morton, and Senator Sherman having either preceded Mr. Pendleton in the announcement of his views, or indorsed what he was among the first to promulgate. The World never gave those views any countenance, and it always felt that it represented on this subject the real feeling of the Democratic party, and of the wisest and most sagacious of its leaders. We are pleased with what occurred in Congress on Thursday, not merely because it vindicates our course (which is a small matter), but because it demonstrates that our confidence in the Democratic party was well-founded, and shows that the honor of the country will be safe in its hands. We have heretofore had more secret sympathy than bold, open support; and not for our own sake, but for the sake of the party, we are glad that its trusted Representatives have had an opportunity to speak out on this subject in language that cannot fail to command the attention of the whole country.

CUBA BEFORE CONGRESS—THE EXTRAORDINARY POSITION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The first significant sounds of the popular voice through Congress on the subject of Cuba was heard in the Senate on Wednesday. On that occasion Mr. Carpenter, the able Senator from Wisconsin, called up his resolution, of which notice had been given the day before, declaring "that, in the opinion of the Senate, the thirty gunboats contracted for in the United States by or in behalf of the Government of Spain, should not be allowed to depart from the United States during the continuance of that rebellion." In spite of the opposition of Mr. Sumner the Senate agreed to take up the resolution, and thus the discussion on the Cuban question was commenced. This was the mode adopted to bring the whole subject before the Senate, and to prevent it being buried or squelched in Mr. Sumner's Committee on Foreign Affairs, though the mover of the resolution had no expectation, probably, of any Congressional action in time to prevent the de-

parture of the first division of the Spanish gunboats from New York.

The administration has forestalled, so far as the action of Congress. It seemed to be impatient to aid the Spaniards and to make war upon the poor Cubans, and therefore would not wait a few days only to hear what Congress would say. Pretending to defer the whole question of Cuba to the representatives of the people, the administration suddenly released the gunboats before Congress had time to act, and in this manner attempted to influence Congress. The Government has really become an ally of Spain against the Cubans, and has made war upon that brave people just as much as if it had sent United States troops or ships-of-war to crush the patriots. The shallow pretence of neutrality or enforcing the laws will deceive no one; for we all know that the administration, which detained the gunboats up to a few days ago, could have held them, if it wished, for a week or two longer, till Congress could act in the matter.

The American people will be astounded at this assumption and treachery of the administration when they have time to reflect upon the matter. But when we speak of the administration in connection with this subject we are disposed to except the President, though he is the head of the Government, and is a measure responsible for the conduct of the Secretary of State and other members of the Cabinet. General Grant, we have no doubt, is the friend of Cuba. He has expressed that on several occasions, and throughout his whole public career he has shown the most ardent patriotism, love of liberty, progressive American ideas, broad national views, and the warmest sympathy for the oppressed. We saw this in the case of Mexico, when he was ready to march an army to drive out the European intruders, to liberate the Mexicans from a foreign imperial power, and to vindicate the Monroe doctrine of America for the Americans. Nor do we believe his heart or character has changed. But General Grant does not comprehend fully foreign questions, and, trained in the school of military discipline, he is disposed to leave the business of the various departments of Government to those who have charge of these departments and who are supposed to understand what is best to be done. Hence, in the case of Cuba, he has relied upon the representations of the Secretary of State.

The Secretary, who is a weak, timid, and incapable man for great affairs beyond the mere routine of his office, has been influenced, probably, by Spanish agents, and among these by his own son-in-law, who, it is reported, receives a fee, or bribe, or whatever it may be called, of forty thousand dollars a year from Spain. He has been influenced, too, no doubt, by Senator Sumner, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Senate, who is the enemy of Cuba, because, forsooth, he imagines that any kindness shown to the Cubans or the recognition of their belligerent rights might destroy the effect of his grand sophomoric speech on the Alabama claims. There is the best reason to believe that the President has been influenced indirectly and the Secretary of State directly in this manner; for both of them last summer openly expressed their sympathy for the Cubans, and the opinion that the time was approaching when the United States must recognize the belligerent rights of independent Cuba. There can be no other cause for the change that has come over them, because it is well known, and the Spanish Government is obliged to confess the fact indirectly, that the insurrection in Cuba is stronger to-day than it has ever been. General Prim acknowledged that forty thousand troops, besides an immense fleet of war vessels, had been sent to Cuba, and yet there is the most urgent demand for more. Is this not a sufficient reply to the reiterated falsehoods that there is no war worthy of being so called, and that the insurrection is losing ground?

Mr. Sumner stated in his remarks, in reply to Senator Carpenter, on Wednesday, that he understood the Cubans had not abolished slavery, or that their decree to that effect was only a pretext for foreign consumption. Now, it is evident that this remark, like the whole tenor of what he said about the Cubans, was malicious and contrary to what he must know was the fact. He must know that in the constitution of the Cuban republic, article 24, adopted April 10, 1869, it is declared, "All the inhabitants of the republic of Cuba are absolutely free," and he ought to know that the masses of the Cuban people have been for a long time past desirous of freeing the slaves; that neither the Cuban Government nor people wish to see slavery exist, and that it only exists now on the island where the Spanish power extends. So, too, of Mr. Sumner's other garbled and studied misrepresentations to the effect that the Cubans have no regular organized or established government, and that they have not acquired the status of belligerents. If a state of war does not exist in Cuba, there never was a war in the world.

THE POLICY OF MAGNANIMITY.

From the N. Y. Times.

General Butler's letter in defense of the policy of proscription is an exceedingly able and adroit specimen of special pleading on a subject in which any special pleading, however able and adroit, is altogether out of place. That he is very caustic upon Mr. Greeley is quite certain; but when from his special province of sarcasm he passes to the broader domain of statesmanship, the phrases he constantly lets fall of "rebellious States," "present Rebel," "active, rampant traitors in Southern Legislatures," and the like, show that he is playing the part of the attorney and advocate, and not of the calm, judicious, candid statesman and legislator.

It is not only attorney-like but childish to talk of not welcoming men to citizenship until they have "fully repented of the part they took in the Rebellion." It is a perjury, or, at best, a schoolmaster's and not a lawyer's spirit, which demands a *pro forma* confession of having been "naughty boys." The best men of the South are not those who make the most wordy and lechrymose pretenses of having acted against their consciences in the late Rebellion, but those who, seeing that the stern attainment of arms has forever decided a contest maintained for such tremendous self-sacrifice on both sides during four years, now heartily support the administration, and set on the principle that slavery and secession are both dead, and that it would be morally and legally a sin and crime to attempt to revive either. It is the men who carry out in good faith the Congressional plan of reconstruction, and who by word and act condemn the old exploded theory of State sovereignty, that are the true hope of the South, and not those who, possibly with sinister ends, fill the air with their cries of "Peace!" We have said that the present is not a case for special pleading, and that it is in this respect that General Butler's view is wrong. The question now is not what this and that "Southern leader" or "ex-Confederate officer" is doing, but what the great nation ought to do. It is a poor and sorry policy to quarrel over the fact that the ar-

gricultural flag was not hoisted over an agricultural fair, when that flag is respected the country over. What we must do is to decide upon our duty, as the people of the United States, and not to be meddling forever with individual obstinacy, self-conceit, or love of notoriety, which provokes one man here and another there to fall to walk up to General Butler's line of demonstrative and over-officious loyalty.

Peace now reigns throughout the length and breadth of the land. Only Georgia threatens further trouble. What did General Reynolds tell us in his report of Texas? That there were "far fewer murders" now than a year ago. It is perfectly true that society is not as well established there as in Maine or Maryland, but was it expected that perfect placidity would follow after the convulsion of war, and order spring at once out of chaos? Take the case of Virginia. By an artful accumulation of a twelvemonth's affairs, a certain convention there lately sought to represent to Congress that the State was in a vortex of anarchy and blood. But half the members withdrew at once, in disgust at this adroit misrepresentation, and protested in a counter appeal to Congress.

Congress demanded bonds, and the bonds are signed, sealed, and delivered. These bonds were reconstruction in opposition to the claims of President Johnson, and in full accordance with the requirements of Congress as the law-making power. To-day, all the States—Georgia alone excepted—are reconstructed; for there can be no doubt that in Mississippi and Texas, as in Virginia, the full requirements of the law will be promptly satisfied. In the case of Georgia stringent legislation is necessary to undo wrongs committed, and to provide guarantees for the future. But even Georgia affords no pretext for perpetrating the disabilities now borne by individuals throughout the South. To ask special pledges and repentances from individuals is to prolong distrust and ill-feeling, and to compromise the dignity of Federal authority.

All, therefore, that need be said of the school of proscriptionists is that they fail to act in a manner worthy of a great nation, and cannot be heeded. Whether their points are well or ill taken is of little consequence; they are employed with mint, anise, and cummin, and are neglecting the weightier matters of the law. The dignity of the United States, the confidence it already feels in its own people, and the confidence it seeks to inspire in foreign powers regarding its future, alike demand the broad and generous policy of a general amnesty. If there chance to be here and there men whom it is well to except, let them be individually reserved, by name, from the operation of a wide-sweeping and magnanimous act. We have conquered once by arms; let us conquer again by magnanimity.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

Whether our national debt shall in good part be paid by the generation which contracted it, or made a perpetual burden upon the American people for all time to come, is one of the gravest questions that ever challenged public attention. We entreat that people to decide it for themselves, and not let it be made the football of aspiring politicians.

If we were to reduce the taxes so as to stop paying the principal of our debt, we shall never resume it. "Next day the fatal precedent will plead," and the debt will remain a burden forever. The next war will largely increase it; the next will swell it still farther, and our posterity will bitterly rue the shortsighted selfishness that compelled them to sweat under a load that should never have been piled upon their shoulders.

Our country was less able to pay its revolutionary debt than it now is to pay its war obligations; yet it did pay it. The War of 1812 hardly burdened it again, but it paid the last farthing within the next quarter of a century, and had a surplus in the Treasury to distribute to the States. In short, paying war debts is a part of the American system, as contradistinguished from the European method of adding debt to debt, and charging over the cost of each war upon future generations.

Had our fathers followed the European method, and left their war debts as a legacy to this generation, the late Rebellion would probably have been successful. With the three debts incurred in the Revolutionary, second British, and Mexican wars resting upon us, we could not have borrowed the vast sums required to maintain the late struggle for the Union. Prudent capitalists would have said, "How can the United States bear up under this new load, seeing that, in the long intervals of peace and prosperity, they have not wiped out the old ones?" It was the fact that we had twice paid off our entire debt that enabled us to contract a third so immense.

We cannot forecast the future. Another war may come upon us as suddenly, as inexorably, as the last did. We are not ready to breast its shock, and shall not be while our present debt hangs over us. To be ready for such emergencies as any nation should anticipate and provide against, we must rapidly and steadily reduce our national debt.

Our Federal taxes are little more than half their amount four years ago. It will be possible to reduce them further so soon as we shall have funded the bulk of our debt at a lower rate of interest—a *pace* rate, instead of the war rate we are still paying. So soon as we shall have saved ten, twenty, or thirty millions per annum in interest, we may safely reduce our taxes by a like amount. But, in order to do this, the Treasury must be continually buying up its outstanding obligations, and thus making them scarcer and scarcer in the market. Arrest this process, and the great volume of our debt would press heavily upon the market, dragging down the price of bonds and rendering it impossible that we should fund those outstanding at a lower rate. Were it morally certain that we should hereafter pay one hundred millions per annum until we had reduced the debt to five hundred millions, an American consul, untroubled at four per cent., having thirty years to run, could be sold at par. Were it settled that we should pay off no more principal, we doubt the feasibility of keeping the five-twentieths at par. Fortune favors the courageous, thrift follows the thrifty, and capital presses its loans upon those who are steadily retiring their debts. Let us never stop reducing ours, at least while we are intent on funding our five-twentieths at 4 to 4 1/2 per cent.

The Newboys' and Bootblacks' Home, in Chicago, has received during the year 34, whose average was fourteen years. One hundred and seventy-eight were orphans.

The Toronto grocers met and unanimously voted to disregard hereafter their practice of giving Christmas boxes to their customers during the holidays.

Dr. Hazard Arnold Potter, eminent for his skill in surgery, died in Geneva on the 1st. He served as surgeon of the 50th New York Volunteers.

A Milwaukee man gave his wife a \$50 green-back a few nights ago for safe-keeping, and she concealed it in the coffee-mill. In the morning the husband ground the coffee, and made rather an expensive cup.

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